Memories in Melody

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ARTHUR CHARLES NASH

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MEMORIES IN MELODY

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BY
ARTHUR CHARLES NASH

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A PRAYER.

I PRAY Thee, Lord, this simple blessing give,—
That ere my life is done,
So joyfully begun,
In quiet I may live
In a sweet cottage sheltered by the hills,
Facing the morning sun
Whose warmth the hollow fills;
Gazing at will upon the distant sea,
There let me dwell with Nature peacefully.

And let me pass my life's calm eventide
Watching the seasons four
From my low cottage door,
In changing beauty slide;
Each with its heavenly purpose featured there
And filled with bounteous store
Of visions good as fair.
Thus living 'mid these emblems of God's grace
Grow purified, and meet Him face to face.

O LOVING HEARTS.

O LOVING hearts together beat,
Fill out the flying hours of youth;
Keep time, O happy, happy feet,
Keep time with beauty and with truth.
Fill out the spring, the summer time,
Too soon the autumn days will fall,
Fill out the lovely days of prime
When Youth and Love are all in all.

O loving hearts fill out the hours
Ere come the cold and wintry days;
Your pathway now is fresh with flowers
And rich with promise all your ways.
Fill out the starry eves and nights,
And happy, happy may you be;
Too soon Youth takes his distant flights,
And Love becomes a memory.

CANADA.

FAIR Land of Promise, Continent of Peace,
Endowed by Nature, husbanded by Man,
Fostered by thy fond parent overseas,
Who finds in thee the circle of her plan;
Bound by the North, whose streams descend to thee,
Bearing rich bounty on their bosoms wide;
And oceans twain, whose wealth perpetually
Pours in from East and West upon the tide;
Mother of men of purpose strong to build
And weld the nation, beating out their cause,
Till from the fire emerge great hopes fulfilled,
Just Government dispensing equal laws,—
How could I love thee more! Yet loving less
Leave room for more to crown love's happiness.

THE HAPPY VALLEY.

I KNOW a valley in Ionian hills
Where choristers forever wake their song,
And where the murmur of a million rills
Makes music all day long.

No city noise on this fair spot intrudes,
Nor restless surging of the distant sea,
No human voice invades these solitudes
Known but to God and me.

I know each green park leading to the sky,
Each gentle slope, each waterfall I love;
'Twere sweet to live alone, alone to die,
Thus raised the world above.

Blithe vale, within thy heart keep endless Spring,
Clear flow thy rivulets to yonder sea,
And while thy birds in copse and covert sing
In dreams I'll dream of thee.

THE MOUNTAINS.

I WILL go up to the mountains,
There to refresh my soul;
I will go up where the ranges
In long blue lines unroll;
For there lies beauty spotless,
Untouched from God's right hand;
On the pine-grown slopes of the hillsides,
The hills of my native land.

For their far-flung spaces draw me,
And strength and peace are there;
'Tis the call of the snow-clad peak-lands,
Of cool and sunlit air;
And like the call of the water
To the camel that treads the sand
The thirst of my heart shall be quenched there
In the hills of my native land.

For there in a cabin, log-built,
By an unknown streamlet cool,
In the shade of the wall with its waterfall,
Close to the bubbling pool,
I will stretch my tired limbs out
And let my spirit rest
In the arms of my long-loved mountains,
The mountains of the West.

INSPIRATION.

COULD I in moving verse recount
The magic mystery of song,
Survey the source or find the fount
From whence it poureth pure and strong,

Then Milton might a pigmy seem,
And Shakespeare a mere mortal man;
For from the heaven of heavens would stream
The truth and beauty of God's plan.
Yet futile such a thought to frame,
Striving to read heaven's hidden scroll;
Contact of the unguarded Flame
Would kill the carrier of my soul.

Let it suffice in moments rare
The floods of inspiration sweep,
And if I sing when all is fair,
In days of dearth I will not weep.

FRIENDSHIP.

IF I could find one great, high-minded soul
With nature of a peerless purity,
Whose vision has the breadth of the wide sea,
Who gazes god-like on the varied whole
Of man and nature, and whose spirit deep,
Fed from a source beyond my power to know,—
Tho' oft receiving, yet will all bestow,—
Can with me joy, or with my sadness weep;
Yet, tho' the years should ripen, and the view,
In rich companionship of life, should spread,
While ever lovelier vistas, old and new,
Entrance my soul as onward I am led,—
Knowing that Love transcends mortality,
Could I not glimpse the glory yet to be!

LABOUR ON.

'LABOUR ON,' said the Master, as He pointed with His finger
Far, far away to the slowly setting sun;
And the children labour faster, while the rays of daylight linger,
Falling fast, fast asleep, o'er their tasks, one by one.

TO THE LAKE OKANAGAN.

NOW steal the thin shafts of the clear moonlight streaming,
O'er thee, Okanagan, with beauty instilled;
Now sleeps the soft light on thy still waters dreaming,
Dark Lake of the Mountains with mystery filled.

So silent, so solemn thy deep purpose keeping,
Scarce whispers the wavelet that moves in the bay;
So quiet, so peaceful, that scarce from their sleeping
The wild-fowl may wake at the breaking of day.

The mist on thy bosom shall rest in the morning,
The stag at the dawn to thy fountains shall stray;
The cloud shall float lightly, thy valleys adorning,
Nor haste the blue haze from the hilltops away.

Now glows the red sun o'er thy wide surface beaming,
And far from the east the vast mirror is thrilled;
Now leave we our vigil and pass from our dreaming,
To work in the world with a yearning fulfilled.

TIME—ETERNITY.

O TIME, remorseless sea, whose shores are strown
With piteous faces, torn from life too soon,
At hopeful dawn or in the pleasant noon,
Ere half the rich and golden hours have flown,—
The poet, dying with a name unknown;
The artist, taken to untimely rest;
The soldier, slain upon a hero's quest;
The statesman, with no monumental stone—
There rolls an Ocean grander than thy Sea,
Upon whose wide, cerulean bosom dwell
Souls of the noble, who have outgrown thee
And thy twin shadow with the passing bell,
Resting, yet working thro' Eternity,
In whose serene dominion all is well.

WORDSWORTH.

HE dwelt with Nature, seeing all
Her truth portrayed in leaf and flower;
And Nature opened her wide heart,
Blessing for him each living hour;
Her music, simple yet profound,
Of wind and wave and falling shower,
Sang to his spirit day by day,
And cheered his philosophic way.
All golden seemed each passing hour
And the year that circled round;
With steadfast eyes upon his goal,
With purpose wise and strong,
The beauty of his inmost soul
He poured in perfect song.

THE CALL.

O WHAT is it keeps calling o'er field and hill and river,
Keeps calling far across the distant sea?
Sweet voices of the homeland that sing to mé for ever,
And hands that rise in dreams to beckon me.

For there I know 'tis Springtime, with gentle April weather,
When birds are building in the budding brake;
'Tis there the nodding flowers lift their stately heads together,
'Tis there the children woodland echoes wake.

'Tis there the swallow cometh, while warm days follow after,
The lambs along the uplands love to play;
And rivulets are running with lilt of merry laughter,
Where other feet than mine with pleasure stray.

O can my heart be singing, when voices still are calling,
Both day and night are calling me to come?
O may the deeps of longing ne'er change to tears afalling,
Ere I awake within the dear old home.

"FALLEN."

HOW art thou fallen from imperial state,
Proud Hohenzollern, in thy latter days;
Far better hadst thou perished in war's blaze,
Or shared the Muscovite's ignoble fate;
Or passed with English Charles the narrow gate,
Who, martyred, won a people's deathless praise.
Louis was kingly e'en in death's dark ways.
Ah! pigmy soul, didst strive to emulate
Rome's noblest Cæsar's titan majesty,
Aping the pomp, yet lacking the great heart?
While nations execrate thine infamy
Thou hidest in a neutral land apart
From thine own people brutalized by thee.
Think deeply ere from earth thou dost depart.

THE HEDGEROW'S SOLILOQUY.

SO ancient are my ivied stems,
Yon lichened spire yet seemeth young,
With many a hundred requiems
Beneath the mould'ring belfry sung.

While yon thatched cottage, neat and trim,
And chimneys smoking peacefully
Above the white-faced windows prim,
Is but an infant unto me.

For tho' its garden stonecrop grows
On walls by winters overworn,
I recollect a thousand snows
While yet its builder was unborn.

I guard the fleecy lambs that skip
By tuft and tussock capped with snow,
Ere yet I thrust an emerald tip,
Or Springtime's bounteous breezes blow.

The clumps of blackthorn, ere the leaf,
With milky clusters cheer my days;
The golden sallows, sadly brief,
Light up my fields and fairy ways.

About my mossy trunks at morn
The rabbits gambol in the dew,
And at my hedgegaps half forlorn
The madcap hare comes peering thro'.

From days of old there blossomed wild
The violet beneath the spray,
Spied by the blue-eyed country child
Upon her early schoolward way.

Secure within my thorny walls
The whitethroat and the robin nest;
Full-throated, when the sunset falls,
The blackbird sings the day to rest.

My grassy slopes with fern are plumed,
And starred with sweetest celandine;
My snowy topknots bright illumed
When every quickset's pranked in green.

I line the summer fields with light,
I ring the orchards round with bloom,
I close my myriad petals white,
Fast folded thro' the nightly gloom.

I hold my dewy bunches up
To greet the dayspring's crimson light;
A diamond in each silver cup,
Or shaken showers of ruby bright.

With many a message from the hills
The hurrying streamlet babbles by;
O quiet eves when murmurous rills
Rehearse their carols 'neath the sky.

When Autumn gales are piping shrill,
And thro' my yellowing thickets blow;
When Wintry days are waxing chill,
While copse and close with scarlet glow,

I list the merry hunting horn,
The sounding choirs of glebe and glade;
The happy music of the morn,
O'er dale and rolling upland played.

And when the whistling northern wind
With snowdrift piles my aged sides,
I sleep within my hardy rind,
And, sleeping, dream of warmer tides.

And sparkling, frosty morns may rise,—
I hang my blazing berries out;
And moons may pale in chilly skies,—
My ivies fold the birds about.

Full many a Yuletide eve I hear
The waits that rouse the mansion sing;
And many a Yuletide sweetly clear
The bells of Christmas morning ring.

And o'er the hills the rising hymn
Swells out afar from nave and aisle;
And o'er my frozen vision dim
Old faces glimmer,—and I smile.

LIFE'S JOYS.

WHEN I reflect upon life's joys I sing,—
Lawns at cool dawn and eve empearled
with dew,
Deep draughts of nectar from a bubbling spring,
Beauty of earth in vernal raiment new,
Night's silence, vocal in sequestered vale
With nightingale's impassioned melody,
Sunlight whitening many a distant sail
That dots the sapphire of the summer sea,
Innocent childhood dreams, glory of youth
Exulting in its fast unfolding powers,
Life's quenchless passion for the golden truth,
Solace from loved ones in forsaken hours, —
I sing, for despite human griefs and tears
My heart goes dancing with the dancing years.

LIFE'S LOSS.

WHEN I reflect upon life's loss I weep,—
Sweet faces that I knew in youth and prime,
Friends whose light step could make my spirit leap,
Hands that I clasped in the far-off Springtime,
Soft melodies whose pathos gave me pain,—
Like love we dream of, yet may never share,—
Songs from loved lips I ne'er shall press again,
Beauty of eye, of brow, of golden hair,
Nature's pageant of varied loveliness,—
Fragrance of violets in woodland glades,
Babbling of brooks in a leafy wilderness,
Sweetness of earth, greenness of springing blades,—
I grieve, knowing that there remains alone
A vestured memory,—the form has flown.

VERSE.

HOW sweetly sleep the dead, who know no pain.
The violet carpets of the valley spread
Their tokens of a yet immortal reign,—
While sweetly sleep the dead.

TO MARGARET.

SOME day when wintry winds are stilled,
When April breezes blow,
We two on some great ship will stand
Looking toward our native land
With happy faces, hand in hand,
And ere twelve tides shall ebb and flow
Find our long hope fulfilled.

And Surrey lanes will bloom again
Richly for you and me;
We two will roam the homeland woods,
Seeking their hidden solitudes,
And so recall, where none intrudes,
Our youthful days of gaiety
Free from all care and pain.

Some day ere hope has turned to tears,
And yet with life can spring,
We two will pluck the nodding sprays
And softly speak of other days
We loitered thro' with sweet delays,
While deep within our hearts will sing
The magic of the years.

TO ENGLAND.

ENGLAND, a glory radiates from thee,
As in the golden days of thy great prime;
As Grecian gods thy heroes are sublime,
Keeping thy name renowned on land and sea.
Rome, Athens, heeded not Nature's decree,—
"In danger's day pleasure becomes a crime";
They perished like the empires of old time,
Which only live in stones and history.
Venice but sings her soft Italian song;
Nineveh, Babylon, in ruins lie;
The hordes of Attila no longer throng
The plains of Europe and of Tartary.
Island home of the beautiful and free,
England! thy Spartan children yet are strong.

SONG.

COME away, away, at the break of day,
While the moon wanes low in the silver west,
And the sun looks forth from the golden east;
For the light is clear on the sapphire bay,
And the skylark springs from his dewy nest,
And the nightingale sings the night to rest
With deep, sweet notes, like intoning priest.

Come away, away, at the break of day,
For the fountains spout in far-off hills,
And rivulets call to carolling rills,
While cascades answer the waterfalls
As they burst to foam o'er rocky walls;
And wavelets chime in the girdled bay,
'Away, away, at the break of day.'

Come away, away, at the break of day,
To field and river, fallow and lea;
For dew lies light in the fairy bells,
And fleecy clouds sail over the sea;
While bracken waves in inland dells,
The heather blooms on luring fells;
And ocean booms from his distant wells—
'Away, away, ye are free, are free,
At the rosy dawn, at the break of day.'

Come away, away, at the break of day,
  Where antlered stag thro' the forest flees,
Where chequered shades o'er the mosses stray,
  And violets perfume the passing breeze;
Where the misty lake at dawn yet sleeps,
  The folded lotus dreams at ease,
The sentinel heron his vigil keeps,
And the silver birch of the woodland weeps;
While cataracts roar from the sounding weir,
  And choristers warble in glen and glade,
And the huntsman's bugle ringeth clear
  Down echoing aisles and arches played.
    Away, away, at the break of day,
    To forest vistas away, away.

SOLITUDE.

COME with me down to the wave-washed, lonely shore,
Come to God's own great ocean solitudes,
Come where man's footsteps never fell before,
And where no other human voice intrudes.
There where the splendid eagle loves to roam,
And the weird seagull flaps across the strand,
Or tops the wavelets' silvern-crested foam,
That crisps the long lit golden line of sand;
There in the majesty of one vast song,
Sung by the wandering waves eternally,
There we shall find His music, steadfast, strong,
Down by the wide, unfathomable sea.

RUTH.

A MAN may dwell in his halls of state,
And because he is rich may deem he is great;
A man may live in the lowliest cell,
And be nobler far than words can tell.

With lofty look may a lord disdain
The men of the world who are coarse and plain;
But one who resides in a realm remote
Knows not what the sighs of a world denote.

Yea, little he learns who lives alone,
And commands his slaves from a golden throne;
And tho' money be much, still is happiness more,
And but known in the house with an open door.

Tho' a lord may think that a country maid,
In the simple clothes of her class arrayed,
Was created to worship his form divine,
And make of his mansion a wondrous shrine,—

He will doubtless find with the passing years,
That life is more than at first appears;
That a mansion often contains a mole,
And a humble cottage a noble soul.

And tho' much may be gained at little cost,
What's easily won is as easily lost;
And the lover who woos without a tear,
May win, but will lose within a year.

So it ever will be wherever we rove,
When the hour is late we awake to love;
And the soul will sigh for a vanished hour,
And the heart will break o'er a perished flower.

I.

I played with Ruth in my infant years;
As children we roved the shelt'ring wood;
From earliest Spring when the emerald bud,
Or the first snowdrop of the copse appears.

When wild March winds blew over the lea,
And white clouds sailed in a dappled sky,
While the daffodils danced right merrily,
We gambolled together, Ruth and I.

We gathered the April violet,
Of sweet perfume and with raindrops wet,
Far in the leaf-strewn hollows set.
Were it well to remember or forget?

Thro' odorous orchards in sunny May,
Where rose or white is each tufted spray,
And fleecy lambs round the tree-trunks play,
We strayed together the livelong day.

Came June with its pageant of roses red,
Rich changeless festival days of sun,
Which passed in procession one by one,
While the lark soared jubilant far overhead.

But the glory of Summer waned at last,
As the golden days of childhood will;
Came winds of Autumn piping shrill,
And wintry snow on the northern blast.

So we played no more by field or stream,
While the snow o'er all the land lay white.
Gone were those days with the swallows' flight,
And Ruth became but a distant dream.

II.

Long years and wild flew over my head,
And college days like a vision fled;
Till I left at last the land of my birth
To visit the beautiful cities of earth.

In Paris I found what should suffice
To surfeit a nature steeped in vice.
There I studied art and nature too,
With boon companions, a merry crew.

As the heart grows weary of endless pain,
And yearns for the hours of peace again,
So the sybarite will pause and sigh
For the simpler joys of a day gone by.

So I left the city of gaiety,
And crossed the Alps into Italy;
And came at length to the ancient home
Of the Cæsars—historical, desolate Rome.

Tho' art was true, the stones were cold
That spake of a civilization old;
And tho' much may be found in a mouldy tomb,
The relics but filled my soul with gloom.

So I sailed to the East and the languorous isles,
Where the sun ever shines and the sea ever smiles;
And these gave me a space my happier youth,
But dreams, sad dreams of my raven Ruth.

When I saw at dawn a dusky queen
Stand 'neath her native palm serene,
'Twould take me back how many a mile,
And tho' sad at heart my lips would smile.

There I lived, but cannot tell how long,
And tho' weary of soul was fed with song;
Yet the tireless sun in a cloudless sky
Could not banish the thoughts of a day gone by.

So I sailed from the islands of languorous glee
To the coast of Ind o'er the burning sea;
And forgot, in that glorious, glamorous clime,
That life must pass with passing Time.

Till a letter arrived from the far-off West,
That my aged father was laid to rest;
And I felt, I will own, a transient pain,
But knew I was lord of a vast domain.

1.

Fan, wind of the Eastern Sea,
  Blow from the happy isles;
Waft me far to the land of the free,
  Over an ocean of smiles.
O bear me into the distant West,
And the heart of the maid my heart loves best.

2.

Strain, sail, at the masthead, strain,
  White in the gleaming sun;
Urge our ship o'er the azure main
  Till the joyous race be run;
'Neath sun and stars to the distant West,
And the heart of the maid my heart loves best.

So here once more I drew free breath,
Tho' I dwelt in the halls made vacant by death;
And a dead man's loss was a live man's need—
For if one die there is one to succeed.

III.

Ruth is the gamekeeper's daughter,
  Ruth is the name I adore;
She lives by the lake's rippling water,
  Close by the reed-fringèd shore.

The cottage is rustic and pretty,
  The garden is laden with flowers;
And here, from the noise of the city,
  I could sit and dream for hours.

But Ruth never greets her lover
  Mid roses and mignonette;
Lest some one should chance to discover
  Where her sweet heart is set.

IV.

I met my love when the sun was low,
  And a soft wind blew from the crimson west;
A pale star shone in the afterglow
  Ere the moon arose from her daily rest.
'O love'—I breathed—'tis well to be
In the calm twilight alone with thee.'

I met my love in the scented dawn,
  At the first faint flush of the rising day;
Shadows slept on each velvet lawn,
  And mists o'er the meadow valleys lay.
'O love'—she sighed—'that I might be
For ever and ever alone with thee.'

V.

Ruth bringeth balm to my spirit,
I walk in a world of delight;
I dwell in high heaven, or near it
When I gaze in the eyes
Of my darling, my prize,
That shine like twin stars on a calm summer night.

Ruth is much more than a temptress,
An Eve in a vale of delight;
Of love's sweet dominion the empress,
She guardeth my soul
While the cold waves roll,
And in my heart reigneth alone of her right.

Ruth is not less of an angel
Because I am less of a man;
Tho' the cruel world may estrange all
The friends of my youth,
'Twould be nothing to Ruth,
Who has loved whole-souled since her being began.

Ruth is a vision of beauty,
Foreshadowing God's perfect plan;
And I find it no unpleasant duty
To stroll and to walk
At her side and to talk
Of all on this earth that brings joy unto man.

VI.

Fly happy bird to your nest
  Perched 'neath the eaves of her home;
And tell her I come at the hour she loves best,
In the cool of the dawn when the world is at rest,
  Go tell her I come, yes, I come.

Obey, happy bird, my behest,
  Carry my love to her home;
And tell her I rise from the night of unrest,
And come at the hour her sweet nature has blest,
  Go tell her I come, yes, I come.

VII.

I arise from sweet dreams of the night,
  Ere the crescent moon wanes from above;
For a vision of joy and delight
  Has tempted my footsteps to rove;
To rove and to wait ere the dawn at her gate,
  'Mid the woodbine's perfume that I love.

Is it love? Is it passion? O heart!
  Or fate that has guided my feet?
Will the night and its magic depart?
  And leave me bitter or sweet?
But O for the grace I might win from her face,
  And her voice where all music doth meet!

O Ruth, shall I wait till the dawn
For a wave of your lily-white hand?
'Mid the flowers that embroider your lawn,
To know what you will and command?
To know and to feel that forgiveness is real,
And a soul can a soul understand!

VIII.

Awake from the night of your slumbers,
The dawn is yet cool by the lake;
And the mavis, with magical numbers,
Her ease in green hollows doth take;
While a tear in the heart of the lily is borne,
And the woodland is fresh with perfume of morn.

The fair lotus lowly is weeping,
The nightingale ceaseth from song;
Arise, O my love, from your sleeping,
I wait in the garden how long!
Ere the pale crescent queen waneth low in the west,
Arise, O my love, from the night of your rest.

IX.

I strolled thro' the woodland that borders the lake,
While the flowers were asleep and the birds were awake;
The lily lay white on her watery bed,
And the skylark was carolling far overhead.

It was but a word that was spoken last night,
Yet I know Ruth will come at the dawning of light;
While the wavelets scarce ripple the sand in the bay,
I know Ruth will come at the breaking of day.

Yet the night has long wept thro' its sorrow of rains,
And the bird of the morn to his loved one complains;
And I wait, and I wait, in the wood by the lake,
For Ruth must be coming,—the flowers are awake.

Be still, O my heart, with thy shadow of fear,
From her cup the frail lily has shed her last tear;
Beat calmly in strength, lest your passion be known,
Tho' you wait, wait, wait in the woodland alone.

X.

Was I dreaming awhile, as I leaned on the stile
  That leads to the meadow below the mill?
Did her footsteps pass o'er the listn'ning grass?
  Or the harebells tremble on yonder hill?
And was it a song of life or a dream?
Or only the musical voice of the stream?

Was I musing on life with Ruth for a wife?
  Yea, her sweet, sweet self as my winsome bride!
When the touch of her dress and a light caress
  Told me Ruth was close at my side.
And O why did I gaze at the distant scene,
As if Ruth was not and had never been?

XI.

I know a lone wood by the river,
I love a lone path in that wood;
Where Ruth would come often and ever,
Where oft at her side I have stood.
And the ruby twilight that preceded the night
Would seem to be one with our mood.

But now I love not the river,
I love not the wood as before;
For Ruth here will come not forever,
Will gladden my heart nevermore.
And the twilight may fall, and the nightingale call,
But the sedge only sighs by the shore.

XII.

For a word, as the wind lightly spoken,
More lightly breathed than a sigh,
May leave two hearts nigh broken,
More surely than vilest lie;
While to one remains but the token,
And to one a tearless eye.

XIII.

Oho, for the tavern, I'll drink to her folly;
My berry-brown Ruth has a will of her own;
And has yielded to pride or to sweet melancholy,
That I, her rich lover, may sue at her throne.

Bring, landlord, the tankard, with foaming ale flowing.
  Why weep for one maiden when many are by?
Shall a wench teach a noble the way of his going?
  Or bring him to book with a tear in her eye?

Drink, comrades, drink deeply, drown prudence and
    reason;
  With merriness banish the clouds of despair;
Now each to his mistress may quaff without treason,
  And each his true maiden may pledge without care.

So here's to the tavern, to madness and folly;
  If Ruth have a will, let her keep it her own;
For what should men know of a sweet melancholy,
  Or feel for a pride that is frozen in stone?

XIV.

It was but an old woman's gossiping tale,
  Brought to the Hall by a bearer of lies;
So I drowned its remembrance in gallons of ale,—
  The tavern to me was a Paradise.
Yet, long, long after it came to me,
As I wandered lonely over the lea,
That Ruth had departed in her despair,—
But to city or country, none knew where.
So I sat once more in my Paradise,
And dulled my senses in sodden vice;
Lest my soul from its wretched torpor rise,
And I gaze in thought on those beautiful eyes.

XV.

Pipe, winds of England shrill;
  Strew leaves o'er mead;
Hide, winds, hide vale and hill,
  Why should I heed!

Blow, gales of England, blow;
  Strip woodlands bare;
Bring, blast, bring wintry snow;
  Why should I care!

Howl, gusts, thro' niche and nook,
  Your songs unkind;
Freeze, winter, lake and brook;
  Why should I mind!

XVI.

Shall I sit by my own hearthstone
  In the warmth of a chilly pride,
While Ruth is away, and maybe lost,
In the distant city's venomous host?
  Alone in the world so cold and wide,
Alone in the world, alone!

Shall I sit here alone, alone,
With a heart as cold as stone?
With a dozen servants at my behest;
With thwarted passion my only guest;

With patient pulse and tearless eye;
With no gentle words to disturb my rest,
No loved one's voice and no infant's cry,—
Shall I sit here alone, alone?

XVII.

I waited and watched on the ringing street,
I sought in the busy city square;
But no fond voice my own did greet,
No loved face lightened my deep despair.

I searched dark alleys by day and night;
I loitered 'mid lowest haunts of men;
Yet gleaned no news of my lost delight
In garret, saloon and gambling den.

But at last I slept from the glaring sun,
And wept my soul to the stars at night;
For human strength was well-nigh run,
And the chance of finding Ruth grew slight.

But tho' sleep may come to a man o'erworn,
The stolen hours are for him unblest;
For one that with vague suspense is torn
Will but turn and toss in a dreamful rest.

Yet there came at last an ancient crone,
Who led me away to a garret bare—
And there on a pallet, but skin and bone,
Lay lovely Ruth with her raven hair.

Gone from her cheek was the tender bloom
That gave a charm to a former day;
And Death drew near in the squalid room,
Waited and watched like a bird of prey.

XVIII.

Weep not, weep not, deep, dark and liquid eyes,
Dry for a space those swiftly streaming tears:
Bring to remembrance dreams of happier years,
And smile as doth the sun in April skies.

XIX.

Yet will we rove the pleasant springtime woods,
Smell the sweet violet, pluck the primrose pale,
Dream where the copses burst their million buds
In myriad emerald studs,
And listen late unto the nightingale.

Yet, yet, for you the cowslip bells shall blow,
The frail narcissus lift its lovely head;
Yet, yet, for you the rivulet shall flow
'Midst lilies all in row,
Making mad music o'er its pebbly bed.

No words, no words to meet my happier mood,
That yet our feet may roam the fragrant land;
Or still together seek the primrose wood
Where oft of old we stood,
Or threaded all its mazes hand in hand.

XX.

I cannot think 'tis such a little while
In which to hope I yet may win a smile;
I cannot think the slowly reddening ray
Means more than the mere closing of the day;
Or that the gathering hours must bring the night,—
Long starless gloom that leads not unto light.

Wan features gazing a brief space in mine,
How could I sin against your soul divine?
Frail form now folded fast in my embrace,
How stain the clear, pure mirror of your face?
Dear eyes now closed maybe in their last sleep,
How cause your deep and tender wells to weep?

O Ruth, my Ruth, I clasp thee closer yet;
  Thy loving heart unto my heart I press
  In one sad, longing, lingering caress,
  Knowing the sun that shines too late to bless,
So soon shall o'er our sorrowing union set.
Speak but a little word to cheer my soul,
  With dying lips one little sentence frame,
That, ere the darkness o'er thy spirit roll,
  Our child may know that you have blessed my name.
Nay, tremble not, for I will hold thee fast,
  And dry the tears that steal across thy face;
Perchance in higher realms, at length, at last,
  We may forget, by God's divinest grace,
The cold, chill memories of my wicked past.

I cannot say to her the word farewell,
  Which seems to banish soul from soul, how long,
And seems to me to breathe a second wrong,
And seal my misdeeds with the passing bell.
O sweetest face grown pale with loveless years,
  Too late, too late a loving word to tell,
Too late to dry those silent falling tears.
Speak, speak, my Ruth, and gaze on me once more;
  O tongue past utterance, talk thro' liquid eyes,
That, ere the solemn closing of the door,
  My soul may feel new hope of Paradise.

Nay, touch her not, smooth not her raven hair;
  Close not her eyes, nor raise her stately head;
Of all earth's daughters beautiful, most fair,
  Alone I do the duties to the dead.
Step ye aside and leave me for a space,
  Nor vex yourselves one single tear to shed;
Cold eyes that looked each day upon her face,
Nor grief across its lineaments could trace,
  Vain is your weeping o'er her lone deathbed.
Had she a soul who lies here lifeless clay,—
  And you could live and see her suffer so?
Had she a heart to cheer your darkest day,—
  And only now the natural tears can flow?
Lived she a life unsullied to all fame,—
And your rude lips can dare to breathe her name?

Had you a child, or you an infant's care,
And kept it folded warmly to your breast?
Yet daily looked upon her dull despair,
And heartless watched her to the last, long rest!
Yet such is life unto the bitter end,—
Friendless we live, and die without a friend!

XXI.

Break, O sad heart! if you must,
Or live thro' dispassionate days;
Break, or decay with rust
That slowly and surely preys
On life, until it's reduced to dust,
Which is blown by the winds a hundred ways.

XXII.

Chill broke the morn, the sky was grey;
A shadowy mist usurped the street;
Reflected were the hurrying feet
That took at dawn their busy way.

An infant's voice returned my own,
As back I moved into the room;
It deepened yet dispelled the gloom,
Tho' near me made me feel alone.

O little eyes with wondering gaze;
O tender feet that scarce can walk;
O eager tongue with baby talk,
May God protect you all your days.

They later came with horse and hearse,
Jet plumes to match Ruth's raven hair;
And scarce could I, in my despair,
Refrain from words of cruel curse.

O bitter, bitter was the sound
Of low funereal dirges sung;
Yet prattle from my infant's tongue
Made my deep sorrow less profound.

At last the babbling mourners went
With idle chat to other spheres;
And I was left to face the years,
'The winter of my discontent.'

Now once more 'neath my own roof tree
I silent pace the polished floor,
And listen for the moving door
That tells of gentle company.

For months of late have crept apace,
And swiftly passed the perfect years;
While little Ruth has soothed my fears,
And given me her mother's face.

XXIII.

I said to my soul—
'While the slow years roll,
Is it well, is it well
To dwell alone?
To keep in the dark an empty throne?
To take of sorrow an ample toll?
To weep o'er the nest when the bird is flown?
To make earth's heaven a second hell?
Alone, alone, alone to dwell,
And hugging grief by a cold hearthstone?'

My soul gave answer, ''Twere good and wise
To watch o'er her earthly Paradise,
Who looks to thee for sunny skies.
For there's much of loss and little of gain
In shedding tears that are void and vain,
O'er the tomb of a loved one's earthly dust,
Only to fill a live heart with pain,
And betray o'er the dead a living trust;
While that hearthstone is never lone
Where a child may prattle in tenderest tone.'

SANCTUARIES.

WHEN the cool eve exhales her dewy breath,
And sweet, and sweeter grows the fragrant air,
And night descends like the calm hand of death,
And field and forest pause as if in prayer;
When sleep, kind monitress, tired eyelids seals,
And dreams gleam golden in her kingdom blest;
When earth her beauty like a nun conceals,
And ocean drowses with slow-heaving breast,—
I muse upon the vast primeval force
That whirls this tiny mote thro' boundless space,
And ask the stars the universal source
Whence earth commenced her planetary race.
The woodland brook, low murmuring replies,
'Nature hath inviolate sanctuaries.'

SHE came, and thro' the woodland glades
The flowers looked up in joy to greet;
She went, and thro' the twilit shades
Lay withered lilies at my feet.

VERSE.

THE lily loves the valley,
The harebell loves the hills,
I love the blossom swinging,
The swallow heavenward winging;
I seek the secret alley,
I revel with the rills,
My waterfalls are singing,
My woodland bells are ringing,—
But the lily loves the valley,
The harebell loves the hills.

WINTER.

PILE logs upon the hearth, lads,
For Winter's here again;
The snow is on the hillside,
The frost is on the pane.
Oh! cold is the night, lads,
And keen the wintry wind,
So think of Yule and heap the fuel,
And banish thoughts unkind.

THE PATH OF EMPIRE.

CAN one keep faith and so dishonoured stand?
Or break a bond and still high honour keep?
As well build castles on the shifting sand,
Or dream what nations sow they shall not reap.

The spoken pledge, the handshake or the deed,
With nations, as with gentlemen, suffice;
And these trade not upon a brother's need,
Nor covenant, and then demand a price.

E'en among thieves some honour has been known,
And rogues with death have sealed the unwritten tie;
The solemn trust is not a trust alone
While human faith therein doth never die.

But what of this?—the "Scrap of Paper" spurned,
That gave a nation's heart the right to beat;
The pact of years in one swift moment burned,
With thousands, homeless, thrown upon the street!

This,—'If the kiss of peace may stand no more,
And symbols, signs no longer with us dwell,
Supreme appeal alone shall be to war,
And paths of empire lead but unto Hell.'

TO SOUTHERN SEAS.

THRO' many a long, long summer night
We clove the tidestream's starlit floor;
With phosphor trails of seagreen light
To Ocean's lurid rim we tore.
Thro' many a long, long summer day
By sand dune, cape and headland flew;
Shore the sea-ridges into spray,
And onward bore across the blue.

And ever to the far sea-line
With merry madness on we passed;
Lurched thro' the rollers' washing brine,
And tacked athwart the screaming blast;
Nor rock nor shoal nor ebb nor flow
Of tides that rouse the heaving deep
Shall check the good ship's course, I trow,
As swift across the world we sweep.

Cold land-locked bays of northern climes
With snow-white foaming girdles bound,
Drew northward with the dying chimes
Of breakers seething in the sound;
While flying shore and fleeting cliff
Died o'er the wild waste's tossing brim;
And orange sail and rocking skiff
Dipped to the far horizon dim.

Shall eve her starry teams unyoke
That kindle in the heavenly way?
Shall sunrise shatter clouds of smoke
With smould'ring brands of blinding day?
Above the sailor's oozy grave,
Where eyeless skull 'mid wreckage lies,
With fire we plough the furrowed wave
'Neath sun and stars and changing skies.

And now upon one flaming dawn,
When ruby streaks the sapphire deep,
We see along the south long-drawn
The Southern Islets wrapped in sleep;
Slow sinks in heaven the lamp of morn,
Rolls night her purple curtain back;
The thousand emerald islets born
Glow fiery-green across our track.

Now soft and low the zephyrs blow,
By barrier reef with seaweed crass;
And softly, too, the waters flow,—
A driftless field of amber glass;
By palm-capped hills and cliffs we go,
Now clad with daybreak's crimson sheen;
And cascades bursting foam below
In sheeted smoke of thinnest green.

On yon red height the cloudlet's flight
Is stayed across the mountain lawn;

From mantled hills a million rills
The ferns of grassy hollows fawn:
By circling walls the fountain-falls
With crystal glories stain the dawn;
And wake the deep from snowy sleep
With long, delicious murmurs drawn.

Still in and out by silver creeks
And burning shores we slide along;
And here the wheeling seamew shrieks,
And here the hazy midges throng;
And drowsed with drifting spicy gales,
Below the bell-flowers drooping red,
Still on we slip with sleepy sails
Like homing wings above us spread.

And here the dewy mosses line
The precipices plumed with fern;
And ivied grots, all coralline,
The echoes of the day return.
Across the ledge the poppy leans
Its scarlet petals to the wave;
Alone the golden lizard gleens,
Or blood-red haunts the hollow cave.

And all the soft sea-music drew
Around the countless diamond isles,

Light lulled along the ambient blue,—
A quiring sea of summer smiles.
'Thro' the long night the cedars sighed,
Beneath the fire-tressed meteor far;
The pine-trees' murmurous sobbing died
High up to yon pale-gleaming star.

LINES TO A POET

I.

O POET! on Parnassus ever dream,
High heaven above thee, at thy feet the world;
See! from the vale the clinging mists upcurled,
And morning glory light with lovely gleam.
Float by thee clearly forms that life reveal,—
Men, matrons, maidens, lovers with glad face,
Lithe youths who speed as in immortal race,
And many striving heavenly light to steal.
Behold earth's cities bare before thine eyes,
Where gather all men,—good, indifferent, ill.
Death, too, thou seest reaping whom he will;
Almost thou hast a glimpse of Paradise.
Ponder mankind's deep mysteries late and long,
And let thy full heart burst in burning song.

II.

O Poet! from the calm height come thou down;
Life's peace and warfare call alike to thee;
Come! melt cold hearts with human sympathy,
For love longs not to clasp a lofty crown.
In hut or palace, and in field or town,
The haunts of men, now let thy footsteps stray;
Take up man's burden thro' the burning day,
And suffering all, add beauty to renown.

Is not thy proud vocation from on high?
Guides not thy pen the finger of God's hand?
Thou art a vessel wrought at His command,
To toil thro' Time and grace Eternity.
So, Poet, sing, that while thy numbers flow
Life's path grow green and heavenly lilies blow.

SIMPLICITY.

MORE to me are the beauties of nature
Than palaces, more unto me
The emerald that shines in the woodland,
The sapphire that burns on the sea;
Yea, more than the tower and the city,
Or minster with musical bells,
The copse and the close by the river,
The strand where the white breaker swells.

Tho' mighty the fanes of a people,
And holy the voice of their praise,
The sky hath a wider dominion,
The deep more melodious lays;
The earth with her field and her fallow,
Where stars as of heaven are strown,
With purity yet shall upbraid them,
And teach them a wisdom her own.

The snowdrop that shines in the dingle,
Snow-white as the snow on the hills;
The violet lulled 'mid the mosses
To warbling and tinkling of rills;
The lily that loves the warm valley,
Wherever the nightingale sings,
Are more unto me in their sweetness
Than ruby and pearl unto kings.

THE DYING CHILD.

COME near, good man of God, and place
Your chair beside my lowly bed;
For I would gaze upon your face,
And on your saintly, snow-white head,
And talk with you of days long dead.

Come near, for I would tell thee now
Of many things of long ago;
Of Springs when every orchard bough
Was ruby-flushed or drowned in snow,
And milk-white daisies thronged below.

Come near and take my hand in thine,—
So frail a hand,—and smoothly set
My pillow, as this brow of mine
That knows no shadow of regret,
And give me just one violet.

Long years ago my mother died,
The sweetest mother God had made;
They placed her by my father's side.
Where in the churchyard oft I played
My parents both were gently laid.

Sweet seemed to me their silent sleep,
And still I played about the stones;
While others came to pray or weep,
And speak in low and sacred tones,
I played about the white headstones.

One blue-eyed brother unto me
They left to cheer my childhood days.
O clearer than the sunlit sea,
Or bluebell of the woodland ways,
Were his dear eyes in those bright days.

When beauteous Spring would deck the land
And every winding vale with flowers,
We raced together hand in hand,
Or chased the rainbow 'tween the showers,
Still on and on for hours and hours.

And oft along the perfumed hills,
When summer rolled the slopes in sleep,
And silence held the upland rills,
Where warm the southern wind did sweep,
Our pleasant rambles did we keep.

When all the stars of heaven were lit,
And night's dim spaces burned with fire,
At this small window we would sit
And watch the round moon mounting higher,
With wonder that could never tire.

Full joyous on the seasons went,
The merry months from moon to moon;
The golden harp of glad content
Ran up eight years from June to June,
An octave of the purest tone.

And then he faded in my sight;
As droops the lily in the sun,
And yet revives across the night,
He passed the seasons one by one,
Till life's brief sands were well-nigh run.

And primrose April drew to May,
And June led forth the pale red rose:
O, then my brother passed away.
Ah! saddest flower that faintly blows
About the copse or hawthorn-rows.

They placed him by my parents' side,
With foam-white blossoms o'er his head;
One sombre cedar branching wide,
A cool green shade above him spread,
While summer's burning moments fled.

I played no more the mounds about,
Nor roused with glee the minster grey;
At dewy eve, when bats were out
And the vast night with stars grew gay,
I came and wept my soul away.

Sometimes a wild-flower wreath I made,—
With every bloom my eyes waxed dim,—
And brought it to the cedar shade,
And talked between my tears to him.
Sometimes I sang a quiet hymn.

And never grew my sorrow less,
  But rather more as months passed by;
And every hour was weariness.
  Yet sometimes, ere my tears were dry,
  I heard a whisper—"By and by!"

The snowy Winter came at last,
  When all the ghostly hills were white;
And ponds and pools were frozen fast
  Thro' still hours of the frosty night;
  And Christmas with its wild delight.

But I had grown so frail, so frail,
  That oft at morn I fell asleep
And dreamed the bithesome nightingale
  My soul in restful ease did keep,
  In flowering summer hollows deep.

And thro' blue days of breaking Spring,
  When blossoms burst from snowy buds;
And in the valleys blackbirds sing,
  Answering each other thro' the woods;
  And fields are green from winter floods,—

So tired, so tired I slowly grew,
  That all day long upon this bed
I lay reclined; and sadly knew
  The violet and primrose spread
  Above my brother's sleeping head.

And now, O saintly man of God,
The cowslip fields are filled with light;
Yet soon I rest beneath the sod,
Forgetful of the swallow's flight,
Forgetful of the blossoms white.

O, fold me closer, closer yet;
A million nightingales, it seems,
Are warbling where the woodlands set
Their music to the tinkling streams,
Within a far-off land of dreams;

A land of dreams, where I may meet
My blue-eyed brother whom I love;
And keeping time with happy feet,
We two, in fairy lands will rove
The heavenly fields of blue above.

TO THE SKYLARK.

SWEET bird of morn that singest in the height,
Canst thou store echoes that the crystal vast
Is thrilled with rapturous music ceaselessly?
Who called thee forth to life and filled thy soul
With melodies too sanctified for earth?
Who gave thee requiems for the dying moon,
And rolling anthems for yon rising orb?
Who bade thee sing when all the world is still
Among the myriad rainbows of the east?
Who formed thy wondrous wings untiringly
To soar for ever and for ever soar
Around the golden splendour of the sun?
Swift from the sable banners of the night
And o'er its trembling fringe thou passest up,
A living arrow thro' the purple space,
To cross the emerald streamers of the east,
And clap thy wings against the gates of dawn.
Rise, happy pilgrim, o'er the lower gloom,
Rise, till mine eyes be dim with watching thee,
Rise, till my soul be drunk with hearing thee,
Rise, till thy flight be lost within the sun,
And heaven, the dream of ages, is attained!

MEMORIAL LINES—IN A GARDEN.

SO sweet a presence breathes within the walks
I ever feel its haunting tenderness;
The spirit of a gentle life is here,
One whom I loved beyond all loveliness.

'Neath rose-clad archway or on emerald lawn
The feet keep pace as thro' remembered years;
The soul of beauty moving like a ghost
And like a memory of forgotten tears.

Or when at rest within a leafy shade
The passion of the past will rise in me;
And rising, fail in aching interludes
Like a dying strain of distant melody.

So sad a presence moves within the walks
I almost feel a hand with light caress;
I cannot all assuage my flowing tears
Whose sweetness tempers half the bitterness.

Come not with hand ungentle to this spot,
Nor utter hasty words upraised in strife;
The spirit of deep love is in the air:
Disturb it not,—thro' death it speaks of life.

SPRING THOUGHTS.

O SWEET is the blue violet
Thro' emerald woods in April days,
When plots and mossy roots are set
With primrose tufts in winding ways.

O, fair with flowers is every field
By silvery stream and grassy shore;
Spring in her beauty stands revealed,
And orchards bloom from more to more.

When snowy clouds with milky sails
Betoken hours of sunny May;
And warmer wax the murmurous gales
That toss the cluster on the spray:

When bluer skies bring clearer dreams
Of friends whom we can ne'er forget,
Who lingered by these winding streams,
And plucked the fragrant violet;

Wakes the far memory of our grief
O'er scenes they loved in former days;
New eloquence of blade and leaf
Too dearly thrills the woodland ways.

O, sweet and sad, O, sad and sweet,
The glad earth decks her smiling breast;
Violets blow about their feet
Who rest forever, gently rest.

DAWN.

I PASS from my portals, the monarch of morning,
And flush the white hills with the charm of my ray;
The mountain and valley with splendour adorning,
I chase the drear night and its shadows away.

I fling my far light over turret and steeple,
The palace of pride and the hovel of pain;
Illumine the streets and paths of the people,
Arousing the toilers to slav'ry again.

I touch with my magic the maid in her sleeping,
All roseate staining her pillow of rest;
I tinge the white hair of the patriarch, keeping
His deathbed, ere seeking the vale of the blest.

I waken the swain from the night of his slumbers,
And hasten him forth to the duties of day;
The shepherd-boy singing melodious numbers,
I clothe in my regal and golden array.

I gaze from the east on the tent and the picket,
The battlefield piled with the wounded and slain;
I scare the wild beast to the woodland and thicket,
That roved till the dawn o'er the desolate plain.

With grief and rejoicing, with anguish and pleasure,
I mingle the cup in this Valley of Strife;
But the depths of humanity no man may measure,
Nor sound with a plummet the wellsprings of Life.

For 'tis but a space from waking to sleeping,
A second in Time is the vanishing span;
Tho' the day of delight is the night, too, of weeping,
I break at the last o'er the empire of man.

DEATH'S WIDE HALL.

IN Death's Wide Hall Death reigns alone,
Colder than stillest mossy stone;
His subjects, laid to endless sleep,
He doth nor ever smile nor weep,
But watch in depths profound doth keep;
And still for ever shall he reap
And draw them to the vasty deep;
Nor sigh of sleeper e'en may fall
In Death's Wide Hall.

Thro' Death's Wide Hall doth flow no sound,
Silence alone will there be found.
No whispers from the sunlit sea,
From river sliding peacefully,
Or streamlet leaping gleefully,
From the blithe bird upon the tree,
Or soaring lark eternally,
From human lip,—no note may fall
In Death's Wide Hall.

Thro' Death's Wide Hall no perfumes rise,
The deadliest rank contagion dies;
No incense from the hills at morn—
The hills that upland flowers adorn—
On breezy wings is lightly borne;

From clover culled beside the corn,
From violet by woodland worn,
No summer fragrance breathes at all
In Death's Wide Hall.

Thro' Death's Wide Hall doth flit no light
To thrill the starlessness of Night;
From eastern founts no sunbeams break,
No hallowed light on lawn or lake,
No dawn to bid the sleeper wake;
At eve no sunset glories shake
With gold to gild each cloudlet flake;
From sun nor star no light may fall
In Death's Wide Hall.

In Death's Wide Hall the banquet's set,
The skeletons are seated yet.
The silent chamber, silent guest;
The silent host, while two abreast
The white-stoled sleepers silent rest;
Above the throne a ghastly crest,
The skull and crossbones stand imprest.
The banquet's set in Death's Wide Hall
For one and all.

DAWN.

MY name is Dawn, the East is mine;
With clarion blast I wake the day,
Then hush the sobbing of the pine,
And flee away.

Fresh are my lips with morning dew,
All odorous my breath with spice;
And melodies I bring to you
From Paradise.

SUMMER.

HOW deep a calm resides within the woods!
Now summer lures unto the leafy shades
Of ancient trees and cool, inviting glades
Him who delights in Nature's solitudes.
Within this sanctuary none intrudes,
Nor hither comes the world with jarring voice;
Here may the wanderer mourn or here rejoice
Or here review brief life's vicissitudes.
And while the birds and brooks in covert green
With song and murmur lull the list'ning day,
A holy peace will steal, and gently sway
His soul in keeping with the quiet scene.
So deep a calm, so sweet a peace has come,
He sees foreshadowings of the eternal home.

LINES.

LO! the Isles Pacific slumber,
And the sleepy breezes blow,
And the wavelets without number
O'er the coral reeflets go;
While the eastern sunlight streaming
Dwells upon the silver sea,
Where the ruby isles lie dreaming,
Lulled and lapped ambrosially.

6 '.M.

DEATH—LIFE.

DEATH came and stood beside a recent tomb,
And spoke to those who lingered there and wept,—
'I am the Power that whispered and she slept;
Fresh on her cheek had flushed the maiden bloom,
Yet now she lies in an eternal gloom.
While fuller life thro' all her being crept,
High in your hearts the hope of future leapt;
I bade Love hide from you the coming doom,
And fill with dance and song the narrowing years;
A dying flame burns brightly; ere the last
I gave your sister joy,—that hour is past;
She moves not, hears not, heeds nor grief nor tears.'
Then Christ smiled down: 'I am the Way,' He said,
'The Truth, the Life.' They looked up—Death had fled.

TO ENGLAND.

I'VE trodden loftier hills than thine,
And vales with vaster pleasures,
Yet ne'er have seen a fairer shrine
Of Nature's beauteous treasures.

My steps have strayed by wider streams
Where wild flowers all may gather,
But greener banks will haunt my dreams
Thro' Springtime's pleasant weather.

I've heard the feathered minstrels sing
When frost and snow have vanished,
More blithely English coverts ring
When wintry cold is banished.

No sweeter sight has touched my heart
Or lifted mood of sadness
Than April clouds that break apart
While earth is filled with gladness.

Thy northern hills are clothed with pine,
Thy moors with purple heather,
And these are mine, and doubly mine,
In clear or stormy weather.

And if my days no more may fall
'Mid thy loved lights and shadows
I'll yet with memory's aid recall
Hills, valleys, streams and meadows;

Deeper each fount of beauty trace,
Tho' ne'er its source discover;
Give each within my heart a place,
A true, tho' distant lover.

THE THRUSH AT MIDNIGHT.

HE kept lone vigil thro' the silent night,
In the death-chamber where his loved one lay;
White gleamed her face against the pillows white,
And fair, so wondrous fair, shone her golden hair,
It scarcely seemed that she had passed away.
Alone he watched the dead quiet upon the bed,
Or gazed forth on the moonlit garden square.

On the deep stillness of the warm June night,
At the midnight hour when all or most do sleep,
A thrush poured forth impassioned melody,
Singing unto his mate the old, sweet strain,
That tells of joy, yet hints at grief and pain:
And louder rose the notes, like songs that leap
To lips that utter love unsparingly.

He listened in the room, the chamber filled with gloom,
And the singing seemed to him like a memory ancient, dim,
Of long-forgotten flower-lit ways, of dead and vanished yesterdays,
Wherein again he lived and loved, and, loving, therein lived and moved,
Thro' summer days, thro' summer nights, of endless joys, of sweet delights.

But the song was hushed ere the rising sun,
Sank the cold moon, her duty done,
The stars paled in high heaven, one by one,
And chill, O, chill as death, stole in the breath of dawn.

Her golden hair around her spread,
The sleeper stirred not upon the bed;
Her lover, intent upon the dead,
Knew her soul had forever and ever fled.

SLEEP IN THY LOWLY COT.

SLEEP in thy lowly cot, thou sweet child, sleep,
The long hours of thy toilful play are done,
Above thee peep the stars out, one by one,
And o'er the world moon-shadows slowly creep.
O, shall thy mother gazing on thee weep
That thou, defenceless being, art alone
Save for herself, or sing that 'neath the sun
To-morrow thou wilt run and shout and leap?
No human heart can mother's feelings trace
And know the deep emotions hidden there,—
And whether fear or joy shall win the race
When both contend within a form so fair!
A wondrous vision is a woman's face
Revealing o'er her child its beauty rare.

NOW wheel the stars heaven's azure field along,
And sinks the moon the while,
Now wakes the summer sea her sleepy song,
By some Pacific isle.

So sink the lives of less or greater worth,
In some dim, distant west;
So lulls the ocean of some other earth
The souls that therein rest.

LONGING.

O COULD I hold to this belief,
And know and feel it best,—
'Love may outlive its wildest grief,
And find in love its rest';

Then might I, knowing love will shine
When passion's fled away,
Find one to shed a love divine
O'er my declining day.

O for the power to banish grief,
O for one hour of rest;
O for the solace, sweet tho' brief,
Upon a loved one's breast!

THE POET'S PRAYER.

WHEN the last breath of life hath stolen from me
And calm possesses this once troubled breast,
Within fair England circled by the sea
Be my last place of rest;
Deep in the sleep of peace no words can tell,
Low lay me in the land I love so well.

And choose a spot beneath a leafy shade
Where all about the cool, green grasses grow,
There let the birds sing clearly unafraid
The songs I used to know,—
And knowing, strove with falt'ring voice and pen
To give their beauty to the world of men.

There where the wood protects the tender flower
And patient nature tells the circling year,
With quiet steps invade the sacred bower
And every living leaf and bloom revere;
The primrose and the violet confess
That Death is servant to their loveliness.

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Nash, Arthur Charles
Memoires in melody

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